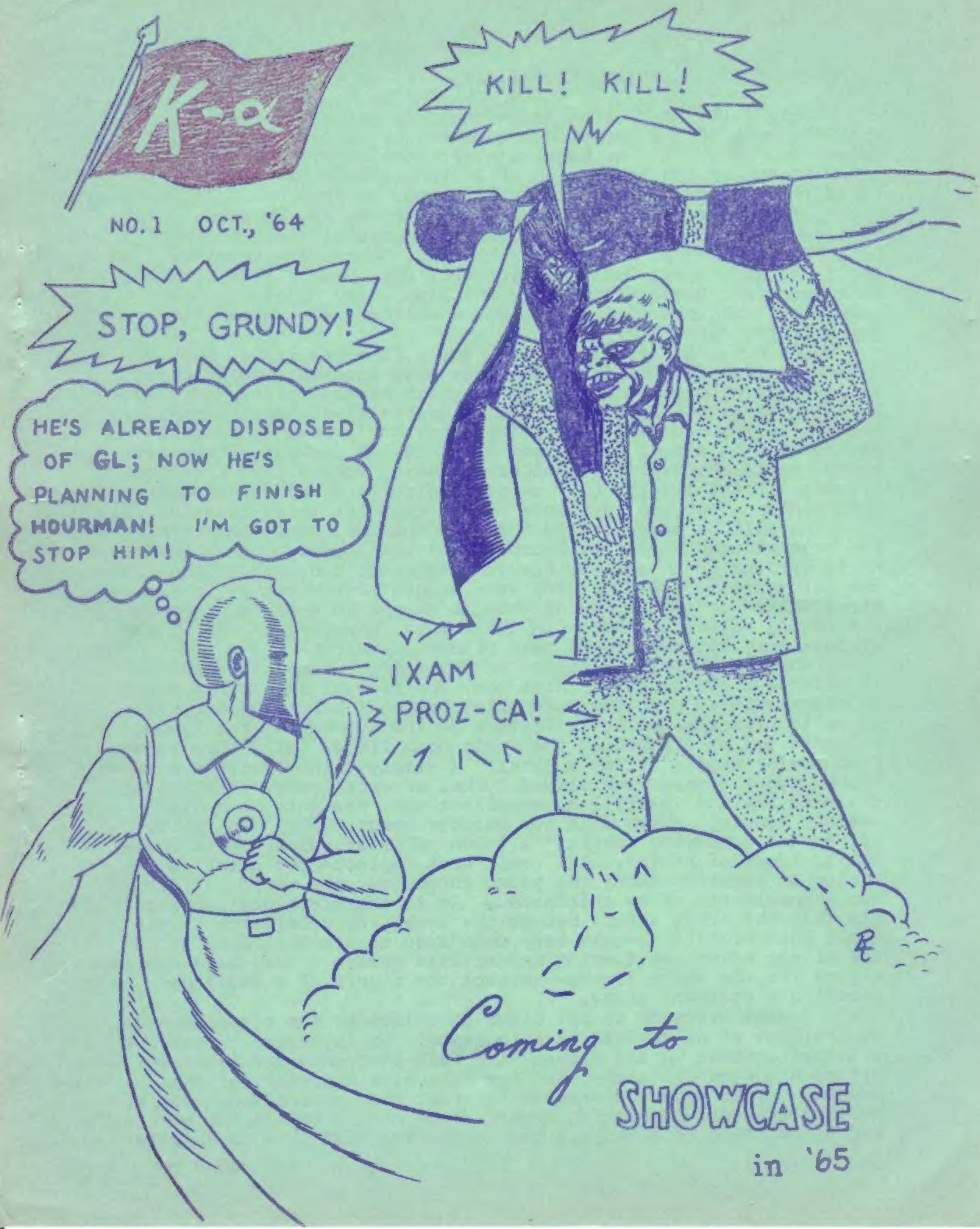
K-a
NO. 1 OCT., '64
KILL! KILL!
STOP, GRUNDY!
HE'S ALREADY DISPOSED OF GL; NOW HE'S PLANNING TO FINISH HOURMAN! I'M GOT TO STOP HIM!
IXAM
PROZ-CA!
Coming to
SHOWCASE
in '65

This issue of K-alpha is undoubtably going to be a little thin, as most of the membership seems to be waiting to debut in issue #2. So be it! We have to start somewhere.

Right now the membership of K-alpha stands at 22, so there is still room for us to invite our friends to join us. I'll send the "pink" letter explaining K-alpha to anyone you suggest. Here is a run down of the membership: Paul Gambaccini, Bob Jennings, Bill Placzek, Daniel Alderson, John Koch, John & Tom McGeehan, Tom Dietz, Richard Kyle, David Castronuovo, Marc Nadel, Pete Jackson, Dick Memorich, David Kaler, Pete Phillips, Glen Goggin, Duncan Robertson, Margaret Gemignani, Howard Keltner, Al Kuhfeld, and yours truly, Agent X.

The McGeehan's contribution, and a fine one it is, took 9 days to arrive from California. They used insured, fourth class mail. Putting minimum insurance on their package (cost: 10¢) was a real brain-storm. The post office people give almost reasonable service to insured mail. Certainly they don't tose an insured package in the corner and forget about it. A package by air mail parcel post, which costs considerably more, took 3 days from California. These are the only reliable figures I have to report this month. They are certainly better than for third class mail.

As will be announced in THE COMIC READER, Paul Gambaccini has been elected Executive Secretary of the Academy. Consequently, he is calling in this issue for your comments and suggestions for the Alley Awards Ballot. Send your suggestions directly to him, since there won't be time for them to appear in K-alpha before the nominating ballots go out. In the future, however, I hope we can discuss such matters before they become pressing.

While I am on the subject of the Alley Awards, I would like to offer a suggestion. I think that the name of the awards should be disassociated with the name Alley Oop. It seems inappropriate to me to pick any one comic feature as the symbol for the trophy we award for excellence in the comic book field. Alley Oop is a fine strip; that's not my quarrel. I simply think that the Academy should adopt a more generalized symbol of excellence. Fortunately, the name "Alley" is still an excellent one, for this word has another meaning, which fits our purpose beautifully. An "alley" is "a choice playing marble," a token of great value. By a curious accident of history, the comic book replaced the alley as a medium of exchange among the young throughout the world. (This was a phenomenon of my childhood.) It is therefore most appropriate that the Alley should become the symbol of excellence in the Comic Book field. I would very much like to see Dick Memorich or one of our other outstanding fan-artists design a new, more abstract figure for the Alley Trophy--perhaps the figure of a small boy shooting a "golden" alley.

I want everyone to pay close attention to the comments and suggestions of Al Kuhfeld in this issue. He is trying to improve a situation that we all lament--the fact that only one fan submitted his name for nomination for Executive Secretary of the Academy. This happened despite the fact that nominations were requested from all Supporting Members some months before the election, and as retiring Secretary, I made a special plea to a dozen lead-

MORE →

ing fans, all of whom were too busy to accept a nomination. See if you think Al's proposals will remedy this situation. My own feeling is that interest, commitment, and genuinely democratic procedures grow hand in hand. Sometimes, the growth seems painfully slow, but it's a goal worth working for at all times, even if success doesn't come all at once.

The cover of this first issue of CAPA-alpha gives my interpretation of a possible scene from the upcoming titanic battle between the macabre menace Solomon Grundy, and two illustrious members of the Justice Society. The story is just coming off the drawing board of Murphy Anderson, and I firmly believe that it will provide an emphatic rebutal to Bob Jenning's argument that the JSA should should be sent back to Limbo. In anticipation of the SHOWCASE appearance early in '65 of these super-beings from Earth II, Roy Thomas has lined up for ALTER EGO #7 three of fandom's most exceptional talents to record for us the backgrounds of Grundy, Dr. Fate, and the Hourman, who will be the principals in the SHOWCASE epic. K-alphan Richard Kyle, highly praised for his article on the Fox Group in XERO #8, has provided the text, with illustrations by those two marvels of the pen and brush, Bill White and Ronn Foss. If Roy succeeds in his desparate effort to meet the Nov. 1 deadline for the Alley Awards Poll, AE-7 is going to offer some real stiff competition this year. As you might expect, I've got my money riding on Roy and ALTER EGO.

Next month, I hope someone else will come up with a cover for K-alpha. The only essentials that the cover must carry are: title, issue number, month and year. The design of the logo is certainly not fixed, although I like the idea of using some kind of banner to carry our Greek letters. It might be best if the cover were submitted on a ditto master, so that if I receive more than one, I can select one and use the others later by altering the issue number and date. However, if you prefer to work on a stencil, don't let this deter you. However, in this case, you must send the ready sheets, since I have no memeograph. If necessary, K-alpha can always run multiple covers. At least, it would be distinctive.

I have very sad news from Rick Weingroff who writes: "After a great deal of thought on the matter, I have decided to leave comic fandom and give up comics for the most part." This is a tremendous loss! After SLAM-BANG #3 we'll no longer have the pleasure of Rick's delightful wit and penetrating analysis. I only hope Rick can be persuaded to make his withdrawal from fandom partial. I can certainly understand and appreciate his dedication to his new college career. No doubt Rick will undertake this with his usual devotion to excellence. I know we all wish him well. However, none of us wants to lose a good friend, and I hope he will reconsider. In order to show him our appreciation for his monumental contribution to Comicdom, I want to dedicate this issue of K-alpha to Rick, and cordially invite him to keep in contact with us through the pages of this APA-zine. These pages will always be open to him. Good luck, Rick. Don't forget us.

This is AGENT X-AECCTCRASIDCIWWS signing off.

Personal Notices Jerry Bails

Because of my wife's continuing illness and indefinite hospitalization, my fanac will be limited largely to K-alpha. I shouldn't have any trouble continuing as Central Mailer, for this requires considerably less time than editing and publishing a regular fanzine. It is for this reason that I am hopeful that K-alpha will be around a long time. The value of K-alpha as a vanguard of quality and as a regular communications link will, however, depend entirely upon the worth of the contributions of its members. I hope that each of you will see the need for giving K-alpha your full support. Remember, this fanzine belongs to you!

I am joining with a number of other collectors in an agreement not to sell rare items from my collection to dealers or profiteers until private collectors have a chance at the items. Some dealers make it a practise to corner the market on particularly prized issues, then turn around and demand an even higher price for items. This technique creates an artificial scarcity in the supply of old issues, thus restricting the free operation of the principle of supply and demand. These middlemen perform no real service; quite the contrary, they do Comicdom a disservice by trying to profit from transactions that could be made just as well between two private collectors. Let me make it perfectly clear that I am not referring to the reputable dealer who makes standing offers to buy entire collections at below-market value. This type of dealer earns his profit by making a capital outlay in order to stock back issues, many of which do not turn over immediately. He performs a valuable service when he hunts out and uncovers hidden caches of magazines outside of Comicdom itself. The dealer I am talking about has airmail subscriptions to our leading trade-zines, and before anyone else even has a chance to see the sale notice has gobbled up the goodies by airmail special delivery. The greatest offenders are the young leeches of Comicdom who have decided to make their fortune bleeding comic collectors. You will notice that these leeches do not contribute to Comicdom in any way. I for one refuse to sell them rare items from my collection, no matter how much they are willing to pay. My prices on items I am releasing from my collection are set by the real demand from private collectors. If they are above the true market value in some instances (and I suspect that this is true in some cases), I will lower my asking price accordingly. I believe that it should be abundantly clear that I do not believe that rare comics should sold at a low price just so everyone can be a collector. Like rare coins or stamps, comics of early vintage can and should demand a high price. This is the best way I know to insure that these rare items will be preserved in private collections. In holding this position I know that I lose favor with some eager young collectors. I can only remind them that I began collecting at the age of twelve, and it was another 12 years before I could earn the price of the comics I dearly longed to own. Furthermore, there are still rare items I can not afford to purchase. There probably always will be. In the meantime I will continue to support the principle that the true supply and the true demand should determine the price of back-issue comics. For this reason I believe it is absurd that any comic published in the last 5 years should be more than 50¢. What do you think?

Info Bits, Comments, and Just Plain Gab

by John Mc Geehan

There are two magazine stands worthy of the name in Santa Ana, California. They are located within 2/3rds of a block of each other ('Ernie's' at 116½ E. 4th St. and 'Doug's' at 214 E. 4th St. and both carry a fairly large & varied selection of magazines & paperbacks. The larger place (Doug's) helps make his overhead by selling soft drinks, pop corn, tobacco, pens, razor blades and other small items along with the printed word & drawn line; while the smaller one only has enough space to stock candy & cigarettes to supplement his income.

They are both serviced by the two distributors in the area & Doug only sells a few printed items that Ernie doesn't (they being British 'girlie' & film mags). All 'spicy' material is handled by a man in Wilmington and the rest comes from the Drowns News Agency in Long Beach. Some might question that 'all' tho since it is Drowns who handles Playboy and several of the 'Keyhole' type tabloids.

Ernie has a five year lease at 75 dollars per month and maintains a $14,000. stock at all times. He rarely orders any thing special and takes what the distributors send him. He gets nothing on consignment; but can return all unsold & unwanted merchandize for credit on his next order. It seems to both of us that both distributors use Ernie & Doug as a wharehouse for his unsold material since they'll send them the same material time and time again. Many a time Ernie opens a box of items he just got in and sees that it is what he sent back a week or a month previous; so he shuts it back up and gives it right back to his suplier before he has completed delively. They'll get 20 copies of a comic annual in that was out six months ago and can send a dozen copies of a comic or other magazine issue back one week and get 20 of the same back next week and 20 more the next. Hense it makes a good 'butt' for many a joke and me and Ernie kid all the time about him and Doug being the storage facilities or scrap paper pile for all of the distributor's unwanted material.

The comic magazines always come in on Tuesday's and Thursday's while Friday is the day that the spicy material arrivies.

Even tho they make the biggest profit precentage wise off of comic magazines, they consider them more anuisance & customer convienance then a 'rent payer'; since it takes the gross profit of five comics to equal that off one Playboy. Comics are marked up 1/3 or 33-1/3%; meaning that Ernie pays 9¢ for a comic that he sells for 12¢; which nets him 3¢ for a 9¢ investment. All paperbacks & other magazines undergo a 1/4th or 25% mark up. For eg: He pays 60¢ for a copy of PLAYBOY that he retails for 75¢; leaving him a 15¢ gross profit for a 60¢ investment (15 over 60 = 1/4th or 25%).

The life blood or meat and potatoes of any'newsstand' are the spicy, girlie, art or what ever label one gives them magazines. These not only sell for 50¢ and up; but they sell well! One man alone spends $40. a month with Ernie & everything he buys concerns the opposite sex. It is easily understood then why over half of the paperbacks & magazines that they carry are devoted to this subject matter; as well as the reason Ernie & Doug doesn't get upset when Drown doesn't send him half of the Marvel super hero comics out this month or skips two issues of the FF in a row.

His rembering to staple all the spicy items shut to prevent browsing and promote buying is more important than the comics comming in from one to three weeks after they are on sale in most every area in the country. I realize that he is in business to make the maximun profit for the least amount of work & time and can undetstand his not getting all hepped up because I have to purchased comics from the company or through friends who live in 'better' districts instead of acquiring them from him or his not crying over the buck or two a month sales he lost to me because the distributor neglected to send him all issues of all the comics I collect; but this rationalizing doesn't get me the comics and it sure makes it hard for me to keep up my collection, muss less acquire the material before every other fan has read it. I know I could solve the 'reading' problem via subscriptions; but I don't care to shell out for copies that arrived folded in half & sometimes torn; especially when my brother acquires a 'reading' set of them at the local used magazine store for a nickle apiece. Since I only have space to store one copy of each issue of the title I collect, I prefer to pay 20¢ to the company for a mint copy then to get a beat up subscription one at retail price or a used one at 5¢. The only thing I can do is hope that one day soon that Downs will get 'on the ball' and quit skipping issues of the best comics on the market. As for the reason for it, I haven't decided if he is selling out his supply to stands closer to home or isn't getting in enough copies of certain issues & has to cut us short. I doubt if he misses certain issues completely; since this would foul up the counting of his purchases with the national distributor and other cities in the area get in issues that our town doesn't. So for some unknown reason, no magazine stand in our twon gets in certain issues of Marvel, Gold Key and other companie's comics because our distributor neglets to send them same.

As to be expected, Thrifty Drug Stores won't handle the comics unless they get a special 'bulk Price' and so they pay a fraction less then 9¢ per comic for them and make a little more then 3¢ off of a comic. They get a 30% mark up on paperbacks instead of just 25% and they make a variety of profit percentages off other magazines. They pay 11¢ for a copy of TV GUIDE for example; which gives them a 4¢ profit for a 11¢ investment.

One of the things that Ernie gets a kick out of is when a mother brings a child in to buy him a comic and the child wants a copy of 'Forbidden Worlds' and the mother wants 'Donald Duck' and they get to arguing and wind up buying nothing. Rare indeed is the parent who will but their child a copy of a super hero or any comic that doesn't contain animial characters or bare the name of Walt Disney on it. Most parents won't even buy 'Archie'; must less 'Superman' and 'Tales to Astonish' or 'Mystery in Space' is out of the question. I don't know how well they sell since Ernie doesn't bother to keep track; but I do know that they get in every issue of 'Mickey Mouse' & 'Donald Duck'; while I couldn't find a single copy of 'Fantastic Four' #30&31. They get in most of the Sup & Batman line of comics; but the Marvel Super Heroe magazines they miss far to many issues of.. As stated previously tho, there is nothing I can do about it except 'bellyache' and that won't acquire me any material. Well, this is enough talk about the distributors & newsstands in our area; how about a few lines on the places in Ours?? --- John Mc Geehan.

LISTEN HERE!

News/views...Paul Gambaccini

Mort Weisinger's BONANZA, U.S.A. column in THIS WEEK magazine is highly popular. In it, Mort gives the latest info on all the stuff one can pick up for free. I suppose that's why it's popular. (For those who don't know, THIS WEEK is the most wide-read magazine in the country. It's a Sunday sypplement to the NY Herald Tribune and others.) Collections of column material appear in Bantam's paperback series 1,001 THINGS YOU CAN GET FREE.

Speaking of the NY HT, its book review section tore into ERB's "Tarzan and the Madman" for everything ranging from lousy style to titillating sex relationships. The traditional about-face concluded that we can thank our lucky stars for TARZAN because of his wholesome world of adventure...

Incidentally, the Charlton TARZAN looks like it can really go places. Unhampered by the barbaric/primitive Marsh art Gold Key has to struggle with, and with the no-balloon style of commentary, the first issue(outside of the cover) was quite an artistic improvement over most TARZANs. Needless to say, the plots were more adult, too. I just wonder if this comic is authorized?!? Or did the copyright on "Jungle Tales" run out?

Dr. Frederic Wertham is in the limelight again. He was "paged" in the Sept. 4 Walter Winchell column; Doc once wrote of a crook Walter's looking for. He also appeared in the LOOK Monster issue, denouncing the beasties. Lemme see...that's comics, TV, Hitchcock, horror, monsters, TARZAN...the only items left to attack are mother, country, and little old ladies. The NY Trib attacks TARZAN, then praises him; Wertham knocks him. Looks like the authorities who are trying to decide what's good for us can't even make up their own minds!

I'm stunned. My letters in comics have brought correspondence from all over the Free World, but a recent letter that took only four days to arrive came from Indonesia, new hotbed of Communist activity. I was sure such capitalistic items weren't allowed..."Frankly, comics are very hard to get around here, so could you arrange to send me some in exchange for something that might be rare from my country..." The letter the writer obtained my name from was an old Schwartz MYSTERY IN SPACE...two years old? I'll be sure to answer THIS one!

I object to fan writers who tee off with: "I think that, in my opinion, blah blah blah etc. ad nauseum, in my opinion..." Too many "In my opinion"s, and arguments are weakened, readers sent to squirm. And: "To be exact, there are really only three or four." Oh, really?

The artwork on one of the better ama strips recently reminded me that the characters are just that: characters on a printed page. There is no life injected into most ama strips, nor even most pro strips. I don't see how people can enjoy this, but if they do, we have no right to order them so they will

stop publishing. We can SUGGEST change in format, but let's remember that a boycott is a most effective defense against things we don't like. I'm strongly against ama strips myself, but get around the problem by merely avoiding these types of zines. By supporting what you like, you're bound to be casting the most effective vote possible.

ATTENTION---all fans and pros! The time for the Alley Awards nears, and the nominating ballot is in the stages of preparation. All suggestions from BOTH fans and pros are wanted...new categories, axing old ones, new scoring methods--anytying at all. Some interesting new suggestions include: dropping the Outstanding Fan Personalities(Writer-Artist) because they are already honored in other divisions such as best strip, article, etc.; differentiating between litho ad ditto covers when honoring fandom's finest artwork; honoring the pro who did the most in the past year for fandom both in zines and elsewhere; and a real dilly that I support---listing the top 25 zines rather than all. In the future, several suggestions from various fen could be combined by having all faneds who wanted their zines on the ballot send a copy to the Exec. Sec., who would declare this zine "eligible" for that year's ballot; it'd automatically go on it. The exec. sec. would then forward said zine to comicdom's lending library for posterity and for those who can't afford purchasing all zines. This library would probably be the one now being formed by Jim Rossow. This system would incorporate the ideas of several fen. As for this year, however, before we even begin talking about next year, we must figure out a way to get all deservin' zines on the ballot. Personally, I support listing the TOP 25 SINGLE ISSUES, as nominated by the Executive Board. In other words, more than one issue of the same zine could be selected. This way, really good efforts would be honored in stricter competition. Fine efforts should be recognized. If, to use as an example, 1 issue of ROCKET'S BLAST stinks, it shouldn't be allowed to tear into the final score of a great one. This way, a zine that published one issue a year would probably rate higher than a zine that had several good issues(and a few bad ones). Overall, this would be good---but, remember, we're honoring outstanding achievements in the Alleys. "Best article," "Best strip," "Best cover"---these divisions do not take into consideration the fan's other work. He is based on that one contribution. So should it be with fanzines if we are to be at all consistent, especially when nobody really has a complete, authoritative list. Let me know how you feel on this and all other aspects of the poll, no matter whatyou have to say. All suggestions are welcomed and considered. If you have a question and desire a reply, please include an self-addressed, stamped envelope; postage costs of the executive secretary in the past have been quite high. Send all comments and such to PAUL GAMBACCINI, 8 ELIZABETH DRIVE, WESTPORT, CONN., 06882.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS RE ACADEMY ELECTIONS Al Kuhfeld

I think the election procedures are in severe need of overhaul. The recent election was very undemocratic. I notice that the main problem is one of time and communication, plus the ground rules, so I've a few suggestions to cure things up--I'd appreciate it if you'd examine them thoroughly and pass them on to the Board.

(1) There should be a period of at least one month between the proposal of an item to be voted upon and the deadline for voting. This is to allow time for discussion.

(2) Any member of the Board should be able to place an item upon the agenda. This could be modified by requiring a petition with a specified reasonable number of Executive Board signatures (perhaps two or three, with five being the practical maximum).

(3) Any member of the Board should be eligible for all elective offices. His (or her) name should be placed upon the ballot only upon receipt by the election official(s) of a letter (from the same person and nobody else) requesting that this be done, accompanied by a platform of some sort. These platforms should be sent out as a supplement to the ballot, and should be a strict requirement (even if they be only mere statements of desire for the office) as the best way to vote for issues and policies of the Academy as well as personalities.

(4) Elections and voting should be confined to at most two periods a year, one being a minor affair devoted solely to proposals and urgent business unable to wait until general elections. Realizing that many members of the Board are tied to school schedules of some sort, these should coincide with vacation periods. Votes of confidence could be employed to allow action on important issues without waiting for a vote and without losing the representative nature of the Board.

(5) Prior to and during these election periods, the Board should publish a fanzine devoted exclusively to proposals and candidates and subsidized in some manner. The frequency of publication should be high. In between elections, communications could be maintained by such means as seem appropriate.

Now, a few comments upon these proposals. The first proposal may seem to take quite a bit of time, but it's necessary. Say I want to write to a friend about an issue on the agenda, and still get my vote in on time. That means three letters must be sent. At two day's delivery time per letter that's six days. Assume one day to think things over in on either end of the line; that's three more days, leaving just six days. And if a person is otherwise busy (which will often happen, what with homework, job, dates, dishes, and the Saturday Night Fights on TV) six days isn't that much. You know how likely fans are to get a reply to a letter inside of a week and a half--not very common, is it? But almost everybody writes inside of a month.

MORE →

COMMENTS ON THE ACADEMY ELECTIONS (Cont'd.) Al Kuhfeld

I rather suspect the second and third proposals are obvious, with the exception of the two modifications on the third proposal. Having a person request that he be placed upon the ballot is one way to get people that what the job, and avoid those that don't. "Drafting" an able person by voting him in although he may not have expressed a desire for the office is morally arguable. On the one hand, it might be said that by being on the Executive Board they have tacitly volunteered for the job; on the other hand, this maneuver is plainly unfair coercion. I think the arms of the able could be adequately twisted beforehand to get them to put their names on the ballot. The platform is necessary in order that the votes be intelligent and informed. We cannot afford TV time and are not news enough to get in the papers--perforce, if we wish our views broadcast, we must arrange ourselves for this to be done.

The fourth and fifth proposals are closely linked. It is certain that some issues will arise that must be dealt with promptly; hence, the extra election (which should perhaps end up the Christmas vacation, leaving summer vacation for the more important general elections) and the provision for votes of confidence. The reason for only two votings per year is that such an informative and intensive publication as the proposed election guide would be an intolerable burden if it were to be published year-round. I think the election guide should be subsidized for the minor election by the Executive Board, and distributed to the Board only; if the General Election Guide did not include coverage of the election of the Board but only Board matters, it too should be subsidized by the Board. It wouldn't run to much, in all probability--a dollar per member per year ought to take care of the costs, especially if ready sheets were utilized extensively and advertising accepted.

Well, I've shot my mouth off enough; but I do think that our election procedure needs overhauling, and I would like to see comments on these proposals by other K-alphans.

* *

ADVERTISEMENT

Please check my price list in COMIC ADVERTISING REVIEW #5 from Bob Jennings (15¢). I have many early DCs in very fine shape for sale. I will accept bids for any of the items which do not sell at my listed price. Trade offers are always welcome. I need the following in particular:

Action #21, 22, 54, Adventure #40, 41, 42, 44, 48, 78, All-American #86, Batman #3, Comic Cavalcade #5, 6, 21, 24, 26, Detective #27-40 except 33 & 39, Flash #5, 69, 70, 71, More Fun #52, 53, Sensation #11, 12, 59, 61, Wonder Woman #48, 53, World's Finest #10, 11, 12.

J. G. Bails

Mandrake the Magician in the Land of X
A 28 page story by
Lee Falk and Phil Davis
published in the David Mc Kay Feature Book#52--1948
reviewed by John Mc Geehan
of the House of Info

A reprint of 1936 and 1937 Sunday newspaper comic strips in color with one tabloid strip per page. Mandrake performed many impossible feats in his early years and the opener of this story was a prime example. While travling a mountain road, Mandrake sees a man fall off a bridge and just by gesturing hypnoticly he keeps the man suspended in mid air until Lothar can lasso him with a lariat and haul the stranger to safety. He turns out to be a Professor Theobold who is besought with grief because he has sent his daughter into the "unknown"! It seems that the prof has invented a machine that projects objects into another or "X" dimension. His daughter, being his assistant, was the first to go on a free junket to "X" and some hostile force is preventing her from completing her round trip. Having a reputation as heroes to maintain, Mandrake and Lothar take off for "X" to preform their usual routine job of surmounting all obstacles and vanquishing all foes to bring back the daughter safely home to her pa. Unlike most heroes however, he has no intention of marrying her in the end, since that would spoil a lot of possibilities for plots that his creator intends to use in future stories.

The first person they come upon in X is made up of living animated metal that has a wheel for legs and a diet of coal, fine grease and oil. Mandrake gets emmeshed in a web of thin living metallic wire mesh, but Lothar gets in his Sunday punch that makes a pile of junk out of the metal or wheel man. In trying to free Mandrake, Lothar too gets intangled in the mesh and both he and Mandrake are carried off by other wheelmen who come upon the scean. A conveyor belt of living metal carries them to the depths of a coal mine where they finally meet Fran Teobold. From her and another human named Tolac Mandrake learns about the wheelmen. The wheelmen consider all humans their eternal slaves who are only good for mining their food and keeping them nice and shinny by polishing,since rust is their greatest fear. Even their houses are living metal, so the oldest cities have the largest houses. Each human has a living wire coil around his leg that unwinds amd clamps around the throat of anyone trying to escape, choking him enough that he knows better than to try it again for fear of being chocked to death. While riding the conveyor belt, Mandrake and Lothar were seperated, and no one has any idea of where he is being kept or even if he is still alive. Mandrake spills water on his leg coil which rusts it alowing him to jerk it off. Just then the wheelmen are attacked by their hereditory enemy---the firebird. They fight it with artilley pieces firing corroding acid and anamated coils which melt as they touch the firebird. Mandrake mentions that Lothar killed a wheelman and learns that he would then be in the avid chamber awaiting death. In the hope that the attack of the firebird has delayed the sentance, Mandrake and Co. battle their way to the chamber and are just in time to keep Lothar from getting a bath of corroding acid. They all step outside only to have the firebird swoop down at them. Luckily, it burns itself out and falls to the ground at their feet as a large burned out cinder.

The group escapes in metal carts and are going along fine until Fran and Tolac's cart hit a bolder which flings them into the jaws of a man eating plant. Mandrake's gesture materializes two axes out of thin air with which him and Lothar make short work of the plant. Later while walking through a dense forest they run into seed traps of the plant men. Their movements shake the seeds down from the trees which grow like lightning and twist around and around a person until he is bound up tight. Toloa, a tree man, rescuses them and offers them food---which turns out to be mud--- the staple diet of a tree man. Lothar tries to pick bananas from a tree and barries from a bush; but since they are alive all he gets for his efforts is a cloud of flying thorns.

While Mandrake is enteraining the tree men with figure-images of the products of his world, they are being spied upon by the dominant race of X - the transparent, cold, cruel, relentress crystal men. The crystal men need human skins to keep them polished so that they can absorb the sun which is both food and weapons to them. They take off on near invisible crystal airplanes and with the use of burning rays they quickly stun and capture the flesh men. Mandrake and Tolac awake in the crystal city. The crystal men have left them unbound and ungarded since they consider the flesh people powerless against their burning rays. A search leads them to the chamber of the crystal king where Fran and Lothar are tied to stakes watching a crystal man who is about to skin them alive with his razor sharp, disk like hand. Mandrake gestures and a rock pile suddenly appears. He heaves one and shatters the head of the crystal executioner. Heartened by the deed, Lothar breaks his bonds and with Mandrake commencs a one sided rock fight. The king focuses a burning ray at Mandrake, but a hynoptic gesture from him causes flames to leap at the king covering him with black soot.

Mandrake, Lothar, Fran and Tolac climb to a high balcony from which they leap into a small lake incredibly far below. As they hit the surface, a gigantic water monster stirs to alertness in the murky depths. Mandrake rams a log into the monster's great jaws; but is caught in its powerful coils. Lothar immeaditely climbs a tall tree and holding a spear in front of him dives into the depths. His tremendous momentum carries it clear through the monster and once again Lothar proves his devotion and worth to his master by risking his life without hesitation to save his.

Safetly on shore, Mandrake decided that the flesh men have been victumined by the metal and crystal men long enough; so he requests Tolac to take him to his tribe so that he can outline plans he has thought up that will put the flesh men back in the position they rightfully belong. Grat is chief of the tribe and as usual, Tolac has to lick him and become king before the rest of the flesh men will agree to Mandrake's plan. The crystal men and their city are easily overcome with small and giant slingshots that Mandrake has made. With them they fire enough rocks and bolders to smash every piece of crystal into meaningless fragments. The flesh men's hereditary fear of the wheelmen cause them to forget Mandrake's instructions and they retreat at first in the battle with the metal city; but Mandrake and Tolac whip them into line and they soon are shooting flaming arrows and with catapults are flinging flaming balls of weeds at them. As Mandrake figgured, so oil and grease soaked is the metal city that the whole place is a roaring inferno in no time. The wheelmen are destroyed to the last nut and Tolac is proclaimed King of X. As everyone knew sinse page ten, he takes Fran as his wife or emperess; so our heroes return home empty handed. They are suprised to learn from Professor Theobold that only an hour has passed since they went forth into the Land of X and he is amazed in turn at their incredible adventures. (cont.)

(continued from other page). This ends the story and it is only to bad that similar type ones aren't written today; though without the impossible stunts that Mandrake performed that aren't used today the adventure never would have come to pass since the good prof. would have fallen to his death in the first few panels. Perhapes someday M & L might journey forth into the Land of "X" or "Y" or some other dimension that won't nedd impossible stunts to get them out of jams. The last four pages of the comic are devoted to a circus story that is a 1936 Sunday strip--a highly condensed one of course that is used as a 'filler' to make the required number of pages in the issue. Tho short, it certainly beats printing some HI AND LOIS or any family comedy strip.

The following story is taken from the first and only issue of the fanzine entitled PLAGUE (January, 1961). This issue has long been out of print and about the only copies of this article that have been circulated were typed carbon ones done byJohn Mc Geehan of the House of Info. Therefore, as it has been seen by a small percentage of comicdom, it is being published for the readers of this fanzine and you can give thanks to your editor/publisher for distributing it to you and to the original publisher (Jiro Tomiyama) and the author of it for not refusing permission to print it. The first issue of PLAGUE contained 30 pages of excellent text and artwork among its 30 pages (including covers) and it is a downright shame that the editor/publisher never found time to bring forth any more such masterpieces!

THE DOWNFALL OF COMICS by Mike Decklinger

At the top half of the page is a cool picture of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck hanging from a tree in a cemetary!!! The picture is by Jiro Tomiyama.

Since I am considered to be somewhat of an authority in the comic book field, I feel it only proper that I relate the events leading up to that fateful day when comics completly vanished from the newstand, never to reappear again, due to the efforts of the censors who, as we all known, had only the "welfare of the children" on their minds in precipitating this incident.

When comics like SUPERMAN, BATMAN, WEIRD SCIENCE, and MICKEY MOUSE, and of course, scores of others, first appeared on the stands they were aroused by the exploit's of these characters. The children were introduced to their fantasy dream world, free from the cluthes of intruding adults who just did not understand. They had a good time reading the illustrated flights of fancy, and everyone conncected with the comic book industry was satisfied.

Crime is something that always exist. When it exists in adult delinguints, it is generally ignored. But when some children turn to crime ... well, that's a horse of another color.

Why, ulcer-ridden business men asked as they glanced over headlines describing war casualties or the testing of more powerful annilation weapons in the newspapers, "aren't children secure today?" Some of them turned to crime, they reasoned, therefore they are insecure. Ergo they all said triumphantly, we wipe out the reason for this insecurity, and we wipe out crime as well.

Obviously, something had to be the scapegoat. Someone suggested sports as the cause, but it was pointed out to him that sports had been used before, and unsuccessfully too, so that was out.

A lot of ideas were tossed around until some man named Fredrick Worthless, who had bribed a University into awarding him a degree, came up with astounding news.

"It's comics," he proclaimed to his hard-eyed listeners, "it's comics that are causing all this trouble." After awaiting for the applause to die down, he continued," "I've been down to the newsstand and I bought several samples of the comic books and now let me show you what the youth of today is coldly and viciously exposed too."

The doctor lugged into a room a large heavy pile of publications. He carefully removed his copies of PLAYBOY, ADAM and SEX FOR ADULTS and tossed them aside, mumbling to himself that nobody had better touch his magazines or else there'd be trouble. He turned to the somewhat depleted stack of comics.

"Let me show you some samples," he cried rightously, snatching up the first comic and opening it. "This publication is a SUPERMAN comic. It tells of the completely incredible adventures of a fantastic man who has super powers on Earth. In the comic he uses the powers for good, but think of what this revelation may have on the readers," as he tapped his skull signficantly. "The youngsters who read this will decide that SUPERMAN can do good things and get away with it. So, if he can do that, why can't they, our poor unprotected children, do bad things and be equally free from the law? He quickly flipped a page and stared at the others as he stabbed a finger on a blightly color panel. "In the picture, Superman is shown landing on an asteroid---whatever that is--- in outer space and extracting some unknown ore which is needed back on Earth. At no time does he ascertain whether the asteroid is the property of anyone else or not. He simply swoops in, takes what he wants, and then leaves with no thought of restitution. This teaches children that they can take what they want."

A few people in the listing audience gasped in astonishment. Realising that he was beginning to make his point, Dr. Worthless plunged on. "In a suceeding story we see Clark Kent, Superman's alter idenity, undressing at night in a public park in order to change into his Superman costume. This obviously is designed to appeal both to the inherent exhibitionist and voyuerchistic tendencies in children, perhapes make these latent tendescies more pronounced. And this is just a sample! The socalled children's comics are not immune from this sort of disgraceful material. A popular animal character known as Donald Duck..." He hesitated for a moment, until one of the women present put aside her copy of MODEL MAN and was once again paying attention to him. "Donald Duck, a popular character, goes around without any pants on!" Three of the women in the audience fainted and had to be revived by their husbands. but the fourth only smiled to herself. Several of the men appeared to be unduly selfconscious.

"Now you see what we're up against," Dr. Worthless proclaimed, striking his fist down onto the table for emphasis. "You see what our children are being exposed to today?"

"We'll fight these comics," soneone in the back of the room yelled. "Yes, we'll fight them," Worthless echoed, "we'll fight them ... and we'll beat them! They won't ruin and deprave the impressionable minds of our children. We'll organize citizens groups, urge every caring parent to fight for their child's sanity against this barrage of ... of junk!"

The audience was in a fevor pitch now. A few shouted threats to lynch the publishers and several of them left to get a rope; but weather this plan was ever carried out is not known.

(continued) As Dr. Worthless turned to leave, he motioned to a close friend to come over. The other people silently filed out, except Dr. Worthless and his friend.

"Look, Charlie," the doctor said when everyone had left, "look at the magazine I picked up." He took a gaudy, folded magazine from his pocket and laid it down on the table. "It's called THE MAGAZINE FOR SADISTIC AND DEPRAVED MINDS, for men only, and there's a beaut of a story in here all about a soldier who is captured by a tribe of sex-starved Amazons who take him to there hideout ...".

Charlie smiled greefully as he thumbed through the magazine. Then he remembered that he had an idea for a story which could very well fit into the magazine he was holding in his hands. He said to Dr. Worthless, "you know, I've got a terrific idea for a story! Let me tell you about it and see what you think. Maybe we could collarborate on it.

"My idea for the story is all about an American who is captured by a group of German women who have been away for a long time fighting the war. They get the G.I. see, and then they ..." Dr. Worthless was delighted with the idea.

Dell Zorro Comics

#228 - "The Mark of Zorro" - (drawn by Bill Ely) 32 pages - 1949
425 - "The Return of Zorro" 34 pgs - 1952
497 - "The Sword of Zorro" 34 pgs - 1953
538 - "The Mask of Zorro" 34 pgs - 1954
574 - "The Hand of Zorro" 34 pages - 1954
617 - "The Quest of Zorro" 34 pgs - 1955
732 - "The Challenge of Zoro" 33 pgs - 1956
882 - "Presenting Senor Zorro"(18); "Z's Secret Passage"(14)-1957
920 - "Ghost of the Mission"(26); "A Bad Day for Bernardo"(6)-1958
933 - "Garcia's Secret"(14); "The King's Emissary"(12); "The Little Zorro"(6) - 1958
960 - "The Eagle's Brood"(26); "The Visitor"(6) - 1958
976 - "Gypsy Warning"(26); "A Double for Diego"(6)- 1959
1003 - "The Marauders of Monterey"(26); "The Enchanted Bell"(6)J-A'
1037 - "The Spaniard's Secret"(26) None Zorro story Sep-Nov'59///59
WDZ8 - "Pirate's Plunder"(20); "Garcia's Package"(6) -Dec-Feb'60
9 - "Masqueraders of Los Gates Canyon"(14); "The Welcome Intruder"(12) - Mar-May'60
10 - "The Bar of Gold"(17); "The Well"(9) -June-Aug'60
11 - "A Stroke of Luck"(16); "The Hunted"(10) - Sept-Nov'60
12 - "The Runaway Witness"(21); "Friend Indeed"(5) - Dec-Fen'61
13 - "The Golden Trail"(20); "Diego's Dilemma"(6) -Mar-May'61
14 - "The Monterey Bravo"(13); "Outlaw Swords"(11) - Jun-Aug'61
15 - "Z Repays a Debt"(10); "The Made-to-Order-Herd"(2); "Brand of Zorro"(13) - Sep-Nov'61

#15 is the last Dell Zorro comic to have come out to date. One-Shot Number 882 was the first "Walt Disney Zorro". Their were seven one-shots and then Zorro got its own number starting with #8 and came out quarterly. No Zorro comics by any other company have come out since the last Dell one that I know of.

Zorro hardcover books: THE MASK OF ZORRO (1920) ; THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ZORRO (1922); ZORRO RIDES AGAIN (1931) DON Q'S LOVE STORY written by K. and Hesketh Pichard. This was the basis for the Douglas Fairbanks movie entitled "Don Q.,Son of Zorro".

The following is a short list of a few of the magazine stories of Zorro that appeared in magazine form.

"The Curse of Capistrano"(MARK OF Z.) - All Story Weekly(Aug.9'19
"The Further Adv. of Z." - Argosy-All Story Weekly //// -???)
(May 6'22 - June 10'22) 6 parts
"Zorro Rides Again" - Argosy (Oct3'31-Oct 24'31) 4 pts
"Zorro Saves a Friend" - Argosy (Nov.12'32) complete-20 pgs long
"Zorro Deals with Treason" - Argosy (Aug 18'34) complete-18 pgs
"Mysterious Don Miguel" - Argosy (Sept.21'35 - Sept. 28'35) 2 pts
28 and 19 pages
"The Sign of Zorro" - Argosy (Jan 25'41 - Feb 22'41) 5 pts
"Zorro Hunts by Night" - Cavalier Classics (Sept'40; Vol.1#2)
(A reprint of "Zorro Hunts a Jackal)
"Zorro Deals with Treason" - Cavalier Classics (July'40; Vol.1#1)
(A reprint of same)
"Zorro Hunts a Jackal" - Argosy (Apr 22'33) complete

The above is all the known (to me) Zorro stories in Argosy ; All Story Weekly & Argosy-All Story Weekly. There were ???Zorro noveletts(short stories) in West Magazine and one Zorro short story in a magazine entitled Short Stories. This later could be a reprint; while all the ones in West were new&original material. A Zorro story was in the May'54 issue of Max Brand Western; and I'm unaware as to weather this was a reprint or new material. As anyone who has read the book knows, THE MARK OF ZORRO or "The Curst of Capistrano" was written as a "one-shot" with appearantly not much thought of a sequel. Zorro is unmasked at the end and his marraige to the 'heroine' ,while not preformed, is an obvious conclusion as there is no longer any need for "Don Diego" to ride forth in 'costume'. The book must have sold well tho, as the author didn't allow them to "live happily ever after". Instead, at the opening of the second novel we find pirates stealing the bride-to-be of Senor Zorro. Our hero gets her back at the end; but since more adventures are forthcoming, they are still unwed at the conclusion of the novel. In order to make the many further adventures of Zorro possible, the 'townspeople' have forgotten that they all learned that Zorro was the alias of Don Diego Vega at the conclusion of MARK; and Sargent Gonzales becomes Sargent Garica in the 1930 & 1940 tales. Bernardo is a minor,minor character in early stories;but later on (especially in the WEST shorts) he takes on the role of a 'suporting actor'. It is from these later tales that the Walt Disney character was taken and be it magazine, book or film, Zorro has yet to "walk down the bridal path". The Zorro stories come from the pen of 'Johnson Mc Culley who wrote numerous short stories and novels; a portion of which were the Zorro pieces. Mr. Mc Culley has been dead for some time, but as he owned the rights to his stories,his estate(wife,etc.) could have them reprinted at any time. The only hitch is that Mr. Disney probably bought up all the rights to the character (perhapes the name) he could and as 'Walt Disney's Zorro' is what he made famous, it is doubtful if the reading publicwould go for 'Mc Culley's Zorro'. One can only speculate on the subject, but it is my belief that the only Zorro who will ever ride again will be the Walt Disney version and when that will be is anybody's guess!

Zorro movie info: "The Mark of Zorro"('20); "Don Q,Son of Z"('25); "The Bold Caballero"('37); "Z's Fighting Legion"('39--12 chap,ser); "The Mark of Z"('40); "The Ghost of Zorro"('49--serial); "Z Rides Again"('37--ser); "Son of Z"('47--ser); "Z's Black Whip"('44-ser)

DC Comics Stories by Otto Binder (1948-1961)

Before and during Otto's career at National (DC), he was chief writer for Fawcett's "Marvel" and other Fawcett strips. From early 1949 to [illegible], during which time the National law suit against Captain Marvel was in progress, Otto wrote no scripts for DC. This was due to the obvious conflict of interest. Otto returned to DC when the threat of Captain Marvel and wrote many Superman scripts over a period of about seven years. In late 1960, he left DC to become editor of SPACE WORLD MAGAZINE.

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, the complete issue (all stories) were written by Otto Binder.

JIMMY OLSEN #1 (Sept-Oct/54) - #12 (June/56) All stories.
#14 (Aug/56) Feats of Chief Supor-Duper
The Boy Superman
#15 (Sept/56) - #29 (June/58) All stories.
#30 (Aug/58) All but story: Cub Who Cried Wolf
#31 (Sept/58) Elastic Lad
Boy Who Hoaxed Superman
#32 (Oct) Super Nose for News
Rock 'n' Roll Superman
#33 (Dec) Legends That Came to Life
Human Flame Thrower
#34 (Jan/59) Superman's Pal of Steel
Most Amazing Camera in the World
#35 (March) - #36 (April) All stories.
None in #37 & 38
#39 (Sept) Million Dollar Mistakes
Jimmy Olsen's Super Signals
#40 (Oct) Invisible Life of Jimmy Olsen
Jimmy Olsen, Supergirl's Pal
#41 (Dec/59) The Robot Reporter
Jimmy Olsen, The Boy Swordsman
None in #42, & 43
#44 (April/60) Wolf Man of Metropolis
#45 (June) Tom Baker, Power Lad
#46 (July) Elastic Lad's Greatest Feats
#47 (Sept) Jimmy Olsen Grows Up
#48 (Oct) Mystery of Tiny Supermen
None in #49
#50 (Jan/61) Weirdest Asteroid in Space
#51 (Mar) The Girl with the Green Hair

HOUSE OF MYSTERY #32 (Nov/54) Pied Piper of the Sea
#37 (Apr/55) The Water World

STAR SPANGLED #91 (June/48) Star Spangled Kid (Intro. Merry)
#85, 86, & 90 Star Spangled Kid & Merry
#94 Captain Compass

WORLD'S FINEST #37 (Nov-Dec/48) - #40, & #42 Green Arrow only

(Continued on next page.)

DC Scripts by [illegible] (continued)

DETECTIVE COMICS
Robot [illegible] #[illegible] (Oct/46), 141, 143, 146-147, 150 (Aug/49)
Captain [illegible] #[illegible] (Mar/54), 207-211, 213-217 (Mar/55)

SHOWCASE (LOIS LANE)
#9 (Aug/57) The New Lois Lane
Mrs. Superman
#10 (Oct/57) Jilting of Superman
Forbidden Krypton Box

LOIS LANE
#1 (Apr/58) Lois Lane, Super Chef
Witch of Metropolis
#2 (June/58) Lois Lane in Hollywood
#3 (Aug/58) Rainbow Superman
#[illegible] (Oct/58) Super Courtship of Lois Lane
#[illegible] (Dec/58) The Fattest Girl in Metropolis
Records for 1959 are missing.
#14 (Jan/60) 3 Nights in the Fortress of Solitude
#15 (Feb/60) All 3 episodes of the serial
#17 (May/60) How Lois Lane Got Her Job
#18 (July/60) Lois Lane Weds Astonding Man
#19 (Aug/60) Superman of the Past
Mr. & Mrs. Clark (Superman) Kent
#22 (Jan/61) The Day When Superman Proposed
#23 (Feb/61) Ten Feats of Elastic Lass
#27 (Aug/61) Last Days of Lois Lane

SUPERMAN
#[illegible] (Nov/56) Puppet with X-Ray Eyes
#111 (Feb/57) Non-super Superman
#114 (July/57) Man Who Discovered Superman's Identity
Superman's Billion Dollar Debt
#115 (Aug/57) Midget Superman
Jimmy Olsen's Lost Pal
#117 (Nov/57) Clark Kent, Man of Mystery
Secret of Fort Superman
#118 (Jan/58) All 3 stories
#120 (March/58) The Day Superman Married
#121 (May/58) Jimmy Olsen Hits the Jackpot
#122 (July/58) All 3 stories
#123 (Aug/58) Entire serial
#124 (Sept/58) Mrs. Superman
Steeplejack of Steel
#126 (Jan/59) Superman's Hunt for Clark Kent
#127 (Feb/59) Titano, the Super Ape
#129 (May/59) Clark Kent, Fireman of Steel
#130 (July/59) Curse of Kryptonite
The Town That Hated Superman
#131 (Aug/59) Unknown Super Deeds
#133 (Nov/59) Super Luck of Badge #77
#136 (Apr/60) Secret of Kryptonite
#138 (July/60) Titano, Return of the Super Ape

(To be continued.)

CHECKLISTS OF FEATURES IN COMIC BOOKS — THE DATA MAN
Of The Golden Age (Approx. 1938-51) — (Howard Keltner)

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This is the first of a series of checklists to appear in K-alpha, all of which will be published as a single volume at a later date. It would be greatly appreciated if anyone could supply the data for the missing issues listed at the bottom of each checklist. The following information is needed: title, issue number, date, cover feature, and list of contents. Any information regarding the artists and writers of strips will also be appreciated. Send this information either to Jerry Bails or Howard Keltner. Thank you.

Which particular titles would you like to have data on first? We can present this data in the order that would best serve the purposes of K-alphans, so pass your requests on to Jerry Bails, who is preparing the masters for these checklists. Also send him any additions or corrections.

TOP-NOTCH COMICS (MLJ/Archie Group)

1939: #1 Dec;
1940: #2 Jan; #3 Feb; #4 (?); #5 May; #6 June; #7 Aug; #8 Sept; #9 Oct; #10 Dec;
1941: #11 Jan; #12 Feb; #13 Mar; #14 Apr; #15 May; #16 June; #17 July; #18 Aug; #19 Sept; #20 Oct; #21 Nov; #22 Dec;
1942: #23 Jan; #24 Feb; #25 Mar; #26 Apr; #27 May; #28 July; #29 Sept; #30 Nov; #31 Dec;
1943: #32 Jan; #33 (?); #34 Mar; #35 Apr; #36 (?); #37 July; #38 (?); #39 Sept; #40 Oct; #41 Nov; #42 (?);
1944: #43 Feb; #44 Apr.

Notes: (1) Title became TOP-NOTCH LAUGH with issue #28.
(2) Title became LAUGH COMICS with issue #45.
(3) Wizard received new costume in #7.
(4) Roy, the Super Boy, was introduced in the Wizard strip in #8.
(5) Cover of #9 featured Roy along with Black Hood.
(6) Cover of #14 featured Roy along with Black Hood. Also true of the covers of #23 & #26.

Features:

Black Hood (Kip Burland) #9-44. Cf (cover-feature) #9-34, 41-43.
The Wizard (Blane Whitney) #1-27. Cf #1-9, 11-13, 15-22, 25, 27.
The Firefly #8-27. (Harley Hudson)
Bob Phantom #8-25. (Walt Whitney)
Scott Rand #1-3.
The West Pointer/Keith Cornell, West Pointer #1-6/7, 9-27.
The Mystic/Kirkin, The Mystic Magician #1-2/5-29.
Lucky Coyne #1.
Man-Hunters #1-?.
Sgt. of the Secret Service #1-3.
Air Patrol/Wings Johnson of the Air Patrol #1-2/3-27.
Fran Frazer #9-25.
The St. Louis Kid #12-27.

(Continued on next page.)

Galahad #5-11. Cf #6.
Dick Storm #2-8.
Stacey Knight #2-3.
Shanghai Sheridan #5-8.
Streak Chandler on Mars #5-8.
Snoop McGook #26-44.
Benvenuto Cellini (True-life story) #26.
The Wright Brothers (TLF) #27.
Pokey Oakey #28-44. Cf #28-43.
Senior Siesta #28-44.
Gloomy Gus #29-44.
Suzie #28-44. Cf #44.
Top-Notch Hall of Fame #28-32.
Percy #28-35.
The Three Monkeyteers #28-43.
Dotty and Ditto #34-44. Cf #35.
Stupidman #44.
Canvas Back Corkle #28.

Issues for which contents data is needed: 4, 33, 36, 38, 42.

THE HANGMAN COMICS (MLJ/Archie Group)

1941: #1 Win;
1942: #2 Spr; #3 Sum; #4 (?); #5 (?);
1943: #6 Spr; #7 Sum; #8 Aut.

Notes:
(1) Issue #1 was titled SPECIAL COMICS.
(2) With issue #9 the title became THE BLACK HOOD COMICS.
(3) Hangman had three stories in each issue.
(4) The Boy Buddies had two stories in each issue except #3, in which there was only one story.

Features:

The Hangman #1-8. Cf #1-8. (Bob Dickering)
The Boy Buddies (Roy from Wizard strip & Dusty from Shield strip) #1-8. Cf #1-6.
The Hall of Shame #6.

Issues for which data is needed: #4 & #5.

SOME NOTES ON ARTISTS AND WRITERS

In 1940 the art on the Wizard strip was by Edmund Ashe Jr., who probably designed the "new" costume which the Wizard acquired in TOP NOTCH #7. The Wizard's final appearances in TN were written by Bill Woolfolk (currently a story editor for the TV Defenders), and handled by Paul Reinman (now with Marvel and ACG). I also understand that Paul is back with Archie and will be handling the Shadow. (Paul is the artist who originally drew Solomon Grundy, who will be reappearing against the JSA in 1965.) The Boy Buddies in HANGMAN COMICS was a Woolfolk-Reinman effort, while either Lucy or King (full names unknown) interpreted Woolfolk's Hangman scripts. Harry Shorten wrote the Firefly, Bob Phantom, & Kardak for a variety of artists. Shorten was editor at MLJ during the switch-over from costumed heroes to Archie and his gang. He also created the Wizard and probably the Shield.

I WAS A TEENAGE GAMBACCINI! or BLECCH!

THE CARPETBAGGERS)

blowing. The birth was normal. Blahh, what omens!

And I love all music, except for violin concertos. I've played the piano for years, and I could will as long as I am able. My musical tastes are varied; let it be said that I think Ferrante and Teicher, Roy Orbison, Peter, Paul, and Mary, Leonard Bernstein, the Beatles, and The Staples High School Choir are all great musicians. I read(regularly) stuff like THE NATIONAL OBSERVER, THE SPORTING NEWS, THE NEW YORK JOURNAL AMERICAN, MUSIC BUSINESS, VARIETY, NME, and CAPA-ALPHA. And I love school and homework and people...

And I do. Riding a bicycle through places and towns and unknown dirt roads you've never been on. Soaking in the all too-few sun benefits most people ignore so flagrantly. Composing free verse poetry. IQ tests, and "newspaper articles" I possibly can. Fighting pseudo sophistication. Always on the go, for there is So Much to Do in So Little Time. Like I said moments ago, I was a Teenage Gambaccini.

COMICDOM

at the New York WORLD'S FAIR...
Paul Gambaccini

It's been said that comics are the most popular media in [illegible] this is so, it would [illegible] fair, the success of Man's [illegible] exhibits on various [illegible] fact, but there [illegible] Cavalcade of [illegible] Days of Kaiser Wilhelm.")

The main point of interest in the Cavalcade of American Comics is the latter living exhibit, which is perhaps the most incredible building(a multi-storied mish-mash of commercials and plugs) at the fair. This exhibit, Comic Heaven, is [illegible] on the bottom floor(it's quite easy to get lost in the [illegible] but fun to go down! Ramps are arranged [illegible] a fire could be chaos). And, thank heaven, it's free. The feature here is original artwork for many of the modern strips. Included, among others, are PEANUTS, POGO, [illegible] and other "favorites." It is commendably noted that many favorites of Random are missing, passed up in favor of YOGI BEAR and other gems. The real gem of the Cavalcade is a sampling from the famous Gordon Campbell collection. This collector's strips include originals of very early [illegible] (as known under the original title "QUEEN CAN'T AND THE KIDS), MAUD the [illegible], [illegible], [illegible] and nearly all others. Here only some are rotated at the fair, those that are present, pasted up neatly and covered with a protective plastic/glass combination. The displayed in an art nouveau circular display that will entertain fans for quite a while. Every Friday evening at 6:00, some cartoonists "draw your favorite characters" in shows called "Cartoon Giveaways." Others appear occasionally on different days at noon-hour shows. The Hall of Education has the NY Daily News public opinion poll---so the News cartoonists sometimes plug their paper their, drawing their characters. Friday afternoons see the RCA color TV exhibit demonstrating interviews and cartooning in color, with top cartoonists, under the direction of Bud Yates. Some of the cartoonists who have appeared at these various places include Lee Starr, Al Capp, Harold Gray, Greig Flessel, Hoster Gould, Gus Edson, Tony di Preta, Harold Foster, and many other lesser "dignitaries."

Although I am not an expert on her strip (no wisecracks!), it appears that Brenda Starr adorns the walls of the modern "Y State pavilion---in living color, yet! No explanation available. And, finally, three Disney "families"---Mickey Mouse(w/Pluto, Goofy, etc.), Snow White dwarfs, and Donald Duck-a-appear hone-t-to-goodness at the Disney Pepsi-Cola ride. Kids are thrilled, [illegible]. I'll conclude, but the bottom of page comes..

R I C H A R D K Y L E ' S

WONDERWORLD

A N I N T R O D U C T I O N

One morning, thirty years ago, in a tiny corner grocery store, I saw my first comic book. I was five years old, and it was something wholly new to my experience --- and to the rest of the wide world's, too! every comic book that had ever been published could have been stacked in that grocer's tiny pile. I ploughed through the brilliant, garish pages, all swarming with tiny picture after picture after picture, in a kind of wonderful daze. And although there were words in the pictures, too, much smaller than any I'd seen before, except in the books grown-ups read or in their newspapers, I knew --- it took only one intuitive glance to know --- that these things weren't meant for grown-ups or the tired weary world they belonged to (the way newspaper funnies often were), they were meant for me.

And four years later, on a warm day in late spring, my belief became a fact. While I waited at a drugstore fountain for a root beer that was growing --- too slowly --- under a fizzing needle of soda-water, I found on the magazine rack behind my revolving stool the first issue of Action Comics. There on the cover, to my delighted astonishment, I saw a man pick up an automobile and hold it over his head. The first true comic book had been born --- and a part of me, and my generation had been born as well.

Now, all these years later, I am still in love with comic books. They have bored me, frustrated me, maddened me, disgusted me, and saddened me, but I still love them, because they have given me more pleasure than they could ever take away. And because I believe that they are only now beginning to realize --- even fragmentarily --- the great potential they have as a new, wholly mature, art-form.

At the first showing of "The Great Train Robbery," the drama, which had been bound to the stage, took on a new dimension, and within a few short years the motion picture developed from an arcade novelty and a cheap entertainment for the poor into an important, and adult, medium. When the first issue of Action Comics appeared, the illustrated story, which had been tied to the cartoon-spread, the novel-in-woodcuts, and the daily newspaper strip, also took on a new dimension --- one that was almost limitless. But unlike the early motion pictures, the comic books did almost nothing to develop their potential. The movies appealed to everyone, the old as well as the young; the comic books appealed only to the new generation into which they had been born, and to the generations that followed. And so it is only today, as those first readers of the comic book become mature, that serious, creative experiments can be attempted. And because that audience is there, they will be attempted.

But in the meantime, let's enjoy the past and the present as well as the future. I'm going to.

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M E D I C I

Would you like to be crippled? Or blind? Or continually near death? Or paralyzed? How would you like it if you could never take off your glasses without destroying everything you look at? Even if it meant you could fly, would you like to have enormous wings sprouting out of your back? And what do you think of a guy who has a tough time making out with a girl? Or a guy who's indifferent to girls? Or a girl who chases every man she meets?

A study of the advertizing guarantees and the circulation statements of the Marvel Comics Group seems to indicate that not nearly as many comic book readers have an appetite for illness as have a taste for health, and healthy heroes --- that most comic book readers want heroes they can identify with twenty-four hours a day. Although the Marvel magazines have apparently discontinued the use of second class mail (and thereby eliminated the need to file a yearly circulation report), the most recent statements --- all from the "minor" Marvel books --- suggest that Fantastic Four and Spiderman are carrying the bulk of the weight of the circulation guarantees. And, aside from the non-superhero Sgt. Fury (which seems to be doing pretty well, itself) and the pallid Strange Tales combination of the Human Torch and the Thing, all the rest of the Marvel magazines have sick heroes. I submit there's a connection between healthiness and big circulations, and sickness and smaller circulations --- and I hope the people at Marvel, my all-around favorite comic book chain, will give it some thought one of these days.

True, Spiderman has his problems, but they are essentially the personal problems we all encounter --- in less heightened form --- in our own lives, and in the long run he has risen above them. Would you like to be Spiderman? For a little while, uh? Well, why not? But who on earth would want to be Iron Man? I wouldn't, not even in a juvenile daydream! I have no decore to live with a bad heart that might fail me any moment my "iron lung" shorted-out.

And it's true, too, that the Thing in the "Fantastic Four" has a very serious problem (who'd want to look like that), but the Thing has not only been given strength to compensate for his ugliness, he has also been given love --- most importantly, however, the Fantastic Four are not individuals, they are a group, and we identify with them collectively. And, collectively, they are a healthy organism, humanly flawed as we all are flawed. But, now, look at the X-Men. Who would want to be any member of that group? The leader, Dr. Xavier, is paralyzed and perhaps sexually impotent; the Angel can fly, but he is a sort of freak who must strap his wings beneath his clothing when he appears in the normal world; the Cyclops is forever burdened with the knowledge that in his natural state, without the protective glasses, his eyes are death itself; the Iceman --- until recently --- was completely unsuccessful with girls, and his current success is as yet minimal; the Beast --- whose powers have never been well defined --- is uncomfortable with his great strength. Only Marvel Girl seems healthy and reasonably normal, the kind of character the female reader could feel some positive identification with. As a group, their desires for love are unfullfilled. And the whole, normal, un-mutated world hates them and is suspicious of them. Collectively, unlike the Fantastic Four, they are an unhealthy, socially rejected, and profoundly neurotic organism, unattractive to the general comic book reader.

Thor, by comparison with Iron Man and the X-Men, is a normal, healthy guy. And one would suspect he is the most successful of all the Marvel secondary superheroes. Although physically crippled, Thor's problem is not a physical one --- he has been forbiddn by Odin, his father, to marry the mortal woman he loves and who loves him --- and this provides a story situation that is probably more acceptable to the young readers, to whom deformity and illness are both frightening and repugnant. Addition-

ally, it symbolizes the relationship of father and son at an early stage in Bruce Banner's life, and this gives the situation a strong psychological validity. But again, it is not an entirely healthy validity, and the strip's essentially introverted appeal must inevitablybe less than the exuberant, extroverted appeal of the Fantastic Four, or the appeal of Spiderman as we watch him grow as a person. Would you want to be Thor?

Daredevil, of course, is blind. It isn't too limiting a blindness, to be sure, but would you want to change places with him? I wouldn't. I don't want to be blind, no matter what the compensations may be.

And would you want to be Giant-Man? Wouldn't it be rather a bore? He's not especially interested in women --- yeah, he's got an explanation, all right, but somehow it doesn't seem very convincing --- or much of anything else that's significant. And what girl would want to be the Wasp? She spends a good part of her time throwing herself, unsuccessfully, at Giant-Man, or any other superhero who happens to be handy. What guy wants a girl he can have any day of the week? Something, you figure, must be wrong with her.

Aside, then, from the Human Torch-Thing strip in Strange Tales (which is weak because they are really a part of the Fantastic Four entity, and taken from it they have no real reason for existence; they become a team without a coach --- or the last two legs of a four-man relay race), and the Captain America secondary feature in Suspense (which has yet to show its strength, but will probably outshine old shellhead in the long run, just on sheer healthiness, if nothing else; Cap's only problems are comparatively minor psychological ones), all the Marvel heroes have severe limitations, except the two circulation leaders. This is no accident, naturally. Stan Lee planned it that way.

But if it is true that the mental and physical ailments of the secondary Marvel heroes are depressing circulations (making them "secondary," in fact) then it'd seem that changes should be made. It isn't enough just to make them well again (or for the first time), nor, without wholly changing the character of the strips, is it always possible.

Stan Lee is a comic book genius, and it is his use --- and virtual introduction --- of psychological and physiological limitations and defects in the superhero world that has given us the Fantastic Four and Spiderman. The apparent box-office weakness of these other characters lies in the overuse of this valuable device. How can things be made right without damaging the characters he has created?

Let's take a look at that problem next issue.

(And, for the record, Iron Man and the X-Men are two of my favorite comics.)

T H E H A L L O F F A M E

The Comic Reader 26 carried an extensive report by the committee of the Hall of Fame of American Comics. Although I'm not a member of the committee, I am, like all comic book fans, sincerely interested in it and in its future. Next issue, I'll have some comments, pro and con, on the report, and I hope I'll be reading some, as well.

T H E G O O D O L D D A Y S D E P T.

In 1945, the Gerard Publishing Company published Federal Men Comics, which was mainly made up of reprints from Siegal and Shuster's early strips, "Federal Men" and "Radio Squad." My comic --- with a Craig Flessel cover from an early Detective --- is supposedly the second issue. Were there any more? Did Gerard publish any other Siegal and Shuster strips?

T H E F U N N I E S

Has anybody out there got "Rick O'Shay" dailies before 1963?

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The Editor